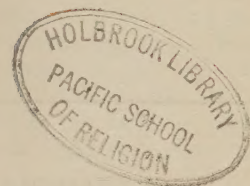




# The South India CHURCHMAN

The Magazine of the Church of South India

● OCTOBER 1979



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# Episcopacy in the Church of South India

## Introduction

This paper is a survey of episcopacy in relation to the birth and growth of the Church of South India hereinafter called C.S.I. The burden for a united church in India could be traced back to the year 1919. Thirty-three leaders of different churches in India gathered together in a place called Tranquebar and met for four days for prayer and for consideration of the mission and unity of the Church. Two of the leaders gathered there were western and the remaining thirty-one were Indians. It is in the context of the mission of the Church that the unity of the Church impinged upon the minds of the Christian leaders and it is in the context of the unity of the Church that episcopacy became a vital consideration. This has to be borne in mind. Some people at the time of the union of the CSI said that this search for union is a pragmatic approach, implying thereby that unity is subservient to mission. But it is actually felt then and now that the division of the Church has impaired the witness of the Church and often-times made a mockery of our proclamation of the Gospel. Disunity is a negation of the truth of the Gospel. Mission and Unity are inseparable.

## The Coming into Being of Episcopacy in the CSI.

At the meeting of Tranquebar an appeal was prepared and sent out to all the churches in India. It is indeed a historic document and its a wonder how in the year 1919 in India some leaders could come to such an understanding of the whole issue and sent out one of the most moving appeals to all the protestant churches in India. The relevance of that appeal for our consideration here is that one of the four important bases cited therein for union is historic episcopate.

'In seeking union the Anglican members present stand for the one ultimate principle of the historic episcopate. They ask the acceptance of the fact of episcopacy and not any theory as to its character. The South India United Church members believe it is a necessary condition that the episcopate should reassume a constitutional form on the primitive, simple, apostolic model... We understand that the acceptance of the fact of the episcopate does not involve the acceptance of any theory of the origin of episcopacy nor any doctrinal interpretation of the fact'. (B. Sundkler, *Church of South India*, p. 102.)

From the time the call for union was issued from Tranquebar the one point which swung the churches in so many directions was episcopacy. It will be a long story if I were to recount the vicissitudes of this debate about episcopacy for nearly twenty-eight years, from 1919 to 1947. The Anglicans were insisting that there must be some kind of supplemental ordination or mutual commissioning with



laying on of hands so that the ministries of all the Churches joining the union will become acceptable to all and will be unified right from the beginning. This was debated in India, in England, in Europe, in U.S.A., in Australia and some other countries also. Most of the Anglicans were adamant on this point. They said in unmistakable terms that this is something which cannot be given up in as much as 'the anglicans had consented to the recognition of spiritual equality, of the universal priesthood of all believers and of the rights of the laity to their full expression in the Church. This principle of spiritual equality shall be maintained throughout at every step of the negotiations'. There were exchanges between leaders in England and their counterparts in India. There were appeals. Tension mounted up, hopes were abandoned, no side would budge. Then came the break through by the daring lead given by Bishop Hollis of Madras. He asked his brother bishops in South India to sign the following statement with him:

'After the inauguration of union we, as bishops of the CSI, shall be ready ourselves to receive communion at the hands of any bishop or presbyter of the united church. All who have the status of presbyters in the united church are capable of performing all the functions assigned to presbyters in the united church by the constitution of that church in every congregation in the united church; that no presbyter of the united church will exercise his ministry congregation where members conscientiously object to his ministrations, and that no member of the united church can "conscientiously object" to the ministrations of any presbyter ordained within the united church. The suitability of a presbyter for a particular congregation is another question and will have to be considered in all cases by the appointing authority' (Sundkler, p. 321).

The effect of this statement was electrifying. It changed the whole situation from one of gloom to that of light. This was the last straw that made union possible. We thank God for the simple and bold step of Bishop Hollis and his brother bishops. Bishop Hollis was great statesman of the church. For the sake of union he suffered much. But the joy of fulfilment to him and to the whole church is greater than the price which he and the church had to pay.

Supplemental ordination, mutual commissioning etc. were all set aside. In the service of inauguration of the CSI the five Anglican bishops were first com-



missioned by the ministers of Methodist and SIUC Churches to exercise the office of a bishop in all the congregations of the whole church. All the ministers were recognized as such in the united church without any further rite of ordination or commissioning.

This step is one of the most glorious things that happened in the inauguration of the CSI. All ministers were accepted without any judgement or evaluation, rite or ceremony. Of course because of this step CSI became a suspect church of a dubious nature. Many Anglican Provinces cut off their connections with the CSI. It was only after about twenty-five years of life as a united church that Anglican Provinces began to develop full communion and inter-communion with the CSI. I may be forgiven for speaking about the CNI at this juncture. CNI was formed in 1970. Through the rite of unification which was through mutual laying on of hands the ministries were fully united in the CNI. It is said by some that this is a much better way of doing things than the practice followed in the CSI. God alone can judge. History alone can pass the verdict. May be in the economy of God's doings both are acceptable. But the fundamental principle which guided the leaders of the union of the CSI in all their negotiations was that it is God who ordains and God who equips and not what we have or possess which makes ordination or ministry valid. It is a continual dependence on Him which is our equipment for our ministry.

Also there was and still is the big debate about episcopacy being the *esse* or *bene esse* of the Church. If we have to be true to the history of the church in India and recognize the acts of God we cannot but say that episcopacy is of the *bene esse* and not the *esse* of the Church. The triune God alone is the *esse* of the Church.

(to be continued)

(Continued from page 7)

guide the family and its members. For instance, he can guide the family in the matters of family worship, he can advise them about reading material for the family. He can guide individual members of the family in the matter, for instance, of choosing life-work or choosing a life mate. He can guide an engaged couple regarding the responsibilities of married life.

(c) Above all the pastor must guide the family to the Supreme Guide, whose birth in a Nazareth home, whose manual labour at his father's bench, whose hallowing presence at the marriage in Cana, whose love of little children, whose constant visits to the Bethany family, whose institution of His redemptive memorial in a home and whose language of the Kingdom in the vocabulary of the family, have for ever deepened and enhanced the significance of the family.

## How is Episcopacy Understood?

I will quote here the portion of the CSI Constitution about the episcopacy and that would throw some light on the matter:

The CSI accepts and will maintain the historic episcopate in a constitutional form. But this acceptance does not commit it to any particular interpretation of episcopacy or to any particular view or belief concerning orders of the ministry and it will not require the acceptance of any such particular interpretation or view as a necessary qualification for its ministry (*The Constitution of the Church of South India*, p. 9).

The main responsibility of a bishop in the CSI is pastoral oversight. A bishop is a leader in evangelism. He is a teacher. He is the one who has responsibility for worship among the people. He is the one who administers discipline in the diocese. He is a father in God. 'He knows he is called, appointed and endowed. He is ever striving to be faithful to the Lord of the Church, knowing that the future of his church is safe in the hands of Him to whom the Church belongs' (Bishop Sumitra).

There is no idea or hint that episcopacy has any special powers in itself. It is a symbol, a service, a cross to carry. The bishop is the focal point of the fellowship of the Church. Through his life and example people accept him and recognize him as a man of God and follow him with love and respect. But if marks of godliness and concern for the people are not seen in the bishop the people do not accept and follow him.

Guest Editorial by:

THE MOST REV. ANANDARAO SAMUEL,  
Moderator, Church of South India.

It is not surprising that many families like to call Him 'an unseen guest at every meal; a silent listener to every conversation'. The greatest privilege of the pastor is to act like the Star of Bethlehem leading and guiding families to the Light of the World and the Light of the families. Well might the Pastor and the families he serves pray:

Holy Jesus, every day  
Keep us in the narrow way;  
And when earthly things are past,  
Bring our ransomed souls at last  
Where they need no star to guide,  
Where no clouds Thy glory hide.

—Bishop J. W. SADIQ.

Courtesy: *Women's Sunday*, August, 1979.



# *'If the Salt Loses its Flavour'*

This paper prepared by Bernard Thorogood was presented to the CWM Council at its meetings in Hong Kong in June 1979. It aroused considerable interest because it dealt openly with a topic which is generally swept under carpet, and which comes close to destroying the Christian fellowship in some parts of the world church. In every place—from the Vatican or Geneva to the smallest congregation in a little Asian village—there are dangers of misusing power and the money which church leaders have to deal with. So we are all challenged to see whether we are using the most effective practical methods of resisting the persistent temptation. Beyond that, there is a genuine issue to be faced about how churches or councils which deal with power and money (wisely or not) may act so humbly towards these resources that they can credibly speak in the name of Christ to the powerless and the hungry. Escaping from the turmoil is a minority Christian response—that of the hermit and the solitary through the ages. For most Christians, involvement is still the calling, and if involvement then dirty hands, and if dirty hands then a life of humble approach to the Lord.

The Hong Kong Council therefore agreed to commend this paper to member churches and institutions for study and action, recognising the need for self-examination at all levels including the Council itself and that in a corrupt world, the wise use of God's gifts is a sign of the presence of the Kingdom of God.

It was also agreed that member churches and institutions be asked to share through CWM their experience in facing up to corrupting influences in order that others may be helped.

The Council however recognised the continuing need for adequate training by Churches in Leadership, administration and accounting as a part of the total preparation of the people of God for service. Therefore CWM is pleased to share in training programmes of a type suitable to local circumstances.

The Council acknowledged that all discussion of this topic had to be set in the context of the mission of the local church, with its duty to witness to the transforming power of God in Christ rather than to defend any particular political, economic or churchly system.

Within the ecumenical movement of the last 50 years we have become accustomed to the assertion that the disunity of the churches is the great handicap to effective witness. Many of us seek greater unity in order to remove that scandal. Yet it is arguable that an

even greater handicap to our witness is corruption within the church of God. In many places the style of corruption in society infects the church so that it no longer reveals the saving power of the Gospel with any conviction. We are all caught up in this. We do not find pure churches on this planet. If we look back to the European churches of the Middle Ages, or to the North American sects in the expansionist era, or to the churches which we know and love and serve today, we see how weak is the flesh which clothes the Spirit.

We believe that in the fellowship of CWM, where there is no need for a publicity exercise or making political speeches, and where we are trying to support one another in faithful witness, there is the opportunity for open discussion of these things. The weakness and the pain are shared. But so also is the hope of God's renewing grace, and any practical assistance that CWM can make available.

## THE ROOTS OF CORRUPTION

It is easy to point to particular instances of corruption but if we are at all sensitive to the human predicament we also have to recognise the many pressures which lead people to this kind of sin.

### Poverty

Where there is very great poverty the ladder of escape is narrow and frail, with crowds trying to climb up it. The scramble for survival is bitter. So it is no wonder that many will resort with honest ambition but with illegitimate methods, to lift themselves or their children above the poverty level.

### An unjust political system

Where a section of the people suffers from great disadvantages, then what is legitimate may be what supports the unjust system, and what is illegitimate may be what reacts against the system. In that setting corruption in the church will not only be personal acts of dishonesty, but the wholesale connivance with a corrupt system.

### Un-christian Standards

If the state has adopted and broadcast a scheme of values which is opposed to Christian morality, then the church is likely to be affected. When, for example, a totalitarian state proclaims that the end justifies the means and that an individual is less important than a system—then the infection may spread.



## **A clash of cultures**

It often happens today that different ethical and social systems have to live side by side, so that things which appear corrupt may in fact be in accordance with the ethics of the other group. For example, the extended family system in many cultures demands that members support one another, and this is the cement which binds society together. But if a politician in power gives privileges to his family, a European calls it nepotism.

## **A bad example**

We may see the colonial or the missionary tradition as setting a poor example in some places. Perhaps the old-style missionary was an autocrat who controlled a lot of church power and money. Where this happened it is not surprising to find national church leaders adopting a similar position, or trying to. The example was potent and misleading. Also churches everywhere seem to have given far more attention to training theologians than to training administrators and accountants. This illustrates the weakness of a doctrine of the ministry which concentrates on one type of worker, the 'minister', and neglects the development of the spiritual gifts of the whole people of God.

So there are many influences which encourage corruption to flourish and the Christian mission must be to attack causes and not only symptoms. But having acknowledged that we still believe that the signs of corruption in the church have to be dealt with faithfully. Paul did not say to the Corinthians, 'You live in a wretched city and so your conduct is perfectly understandable'. Instead he tried to show them the nature of sin, the nature of Christ and his new life offered to all. So in this paper we note some of the actual types of corruption which disfigure the life of the churches, believing that whatever our circumstances we are still responsible to God for our obedience.

## **THE NATURE OF CORRUPTION IN THE CHURCHES**

### **The misuse of power**

In many countries the church has some power in society. Where the church runs schools, hospitals or commercial ventures it has power, for it controls a service which is valued. In some countries the church has political power and can put pressure on the government. Where power is used to bring advantage to an individual or a family, then we see corruption. Where pressure is used to gain a privilege just for the members of the church we see pressure being used in a corrupt way. Such corruption of power gives rise to bribery for people soon learn that the power is being twisted for private purposes and that money or favours can achieve a fresh twist.

### **The misuse of money**

This is a very widespread problem and there are no churches which have not suffered from it. Money in the church may come from several sources—from the free giving by the members, from fees for specialist activities or services, from trading institutions, from investments, from grants given by other churches or governments or societies. Once the money is received

by the church the church becomes responsible for it, and if some of the money is diverted into purposes not approved by the church and the donors, then misappropriation takes place. The temptation to misapply money is very great, and especially so in poor countries.

### **The misuse of Ordained ministry**

By its very nature the work of the minister or priest or pastor carries the danger of corruption. For we are all called to represent to people the will and the nature of God himself. To attempt such a ministry gives us a place of authority which can easily be abused. I think it is an abuse of ministerial authority to dangle people over the pit of hell, to frighten ignorant people into some kind of pledge, to denounce people we do not like. Then the pulpit is itself corrupted for personal advantage.

### **The misuse of fellowship**

There have been situations in which the coming together of people as a congregation is itself corrupted and used for mean purposes. The congregation, in the hands of a powerful elder, may become a gang to assault people of another religion or language. Or the fellowship of a church assembly or council can be corrupted by a strong group which diverts it from its true function and turns it into a factional lobby.

### **The misuse of Christ**

I suppose that all the points above are in a sense the dirtying, the wounding of the face of Christ. But Christians can go further and use Christ Himself as a magic man, as a self-justification, as a convenient myth. Then we take the source of our whole faith and obscure him with our dirty clothes.

There is the bad news, the story of human sin spoiling the work of God's Spirit in the life of the church. It is a story which goes right back to the Acts, the Epistles and the Gospels, where there are repeated signs of corruption. The bright side of the picture is that corruption is very rarely total. Some strong and pure spirits usually remain to testify to the grace of God. Ananias and Sapphira were met by Peter, and the power-hungry cliques at Corinth were met Paul. Out of a very corrupt Medieval Catholic church some shining saints emerged. Perhaps this is the persistent witness of church history, that God does not leave his church in corruption, but finds men and women who will either start new communities of faith or will reveal a new way of obedience or will act as the scourge of the church. The Judgement, as Peter wrote, begins in God's own household (1 Peter 4:17) Thank God for that!

But we are surely not meant to sit back and wait for a new saint to arise before doing anything. We are meant to be wise in the handling of the things of this world, and to take every sensible precaution in the church against corruption. Here are some common things we can do.

## **REGARDING POWER**

If 'all power tends to corrupt' then we may respond that no church officer or committee or institution should have power at all. But this is impossible if



the church is to have a continuing physical presence in today's world. The Christian contribution to social ethics is not to opt out of the problem but to display the healing presence of Christ with in it. How then can we help the churches to display a humble and loving and honest use of such power as comes to us?

We can refuse to allow too many separate levers of power to be in the hands of one person or one small group. For example, if the Council of one diocese controls the money and the policy of many schools and hospitals and pastorates and charities, then it is probably too powerful for its own good. Many of the institutions could be off-loaded and run by local community boards, thus involving more people who know the locality and the professional skills needed. Perhaps there should be a limit on the number of committees on which one churchman may serve.

We can ensure that individuals who have power have to account for the way they handle their responsibility, and that they face re-election or re-appointment regularly. Life long security may be a temptation, and to face the constituency that made the appointment and ask for renewal or re-location may give all parties an opportunity for heart-searching.

We can seek means by which those in positions of power in the church have a pastor who will care for them spiritually. All too often we assume that the bishop or the moderator or the general secretary has no need of a pastor. Yet his need is perhaps greater than we imagine. He needs the 'confessional' where private matters really are private and where he can be spoken to frankly by a father in God. Do we make such arrangements possible?

We can separate, as far as possible, commercial enterprises from the life of the church. Let the stores or co-operatives have their own independent life, so that they may develop professional management and not be subject to all the complications of church politics.

We can encourage and support those Christians who resist corrupt practices. The struggle may be a very lonely one. The chairman of the committee who refuses to accept traditional favouritism in listing new college entrants may be hated by the majority. But he will be helped by the prayers of responsible Christians far and near.

We can outlaw electioneering for church offices. It is entirely inappropriate when seeking the will of God about the direction of ministry to make it into a sort of American Presidential race. This opens the door to all sorts of pressure and bribery. It might be useful in some countries to see whether elections could be swifter and, if the electors are a small body like a committee, whether the election could take place during a spiritual retreat.

## REGARDING MONEY

Since the church is a corporate body, we do not allow one person to decide how the church's money is to be used, nor do we allow one person on his own authority to use the money. We provide the necessary

assurance of normal financial procedure, that a group duly appointed can authorise and probably two or more have to sign cheques. Of course, it is possible for the whole group to steal but it is unlikely! Then we use the procedure of audit by which the church accounts are regularly checked by an independent accountant, and it is well worth paying money to ensure that this is regularly done. Finally we use the presentation of accounts for approval by the appropriate council of the church. The presentation has to be in a form people can understand, it has to be complete and it has to invite questions. I think one of the danger points is when church people in an assembly feel that the accounts are so technical that they cannot understand them, and so pass them 'on the nod'. This is where the chairman has a duty, to insist on full and simple explanation. These three stages—proper authorisation for payments, regular independent audit, full presentation—are well tried methods for preventing financial corruption going on for long. If we are not using those methods we must ask whether in fact we are encouraging dishonesty.

Another practical aspect is that we should care for the people who actually have to handle church money. If they are employed by the church but are paid less than a living wage, then the church is putting a very great strain upon them. Should things go wrong the church will be shown up as a very bad employer with a special burden of guilt.

There is a further aspect which may not seem so practical but I think is important. We need to help all Christians understand who the church money belongs to. It belongs to God. It does not just belong to the local congregation where it is kept—for that group is only a part of a wider fellowship and all it possesses is held in trust. Church money is not like income tax money, for it is offered on the Lord's Table in the spirit of the offering of Christ. So it can only be used with great care and responsibility.

In today's international church life there is another aspect of money that troubles some of us. If a church receives a grant for a particular purpose and then changes its mind, can it divert the grant for another purpose? I think the answer must be that it can only do so if the donor agency agrees. For to take the unilateral action is to deny the fellowship.

## SOME THEOLOGICAL ISSUES

These practical matters point us towards some deep and abiding questions which we should note.

Always and everywhere the church is a worldly institution. It lives in the world for the world and is made up of flesh and blood people. Yet it claims also to be a divine entity, its boundaries known only to God and its life dependent on his spirit. It has been a classical error to emphasise the second too much and for churchmen to act as though all divine authority and right is theirs. In reaction we may swing too far towards the former, and stress the very human nature of the church, influenced by sociological factors. The mingling of the divine and the human, the flesh and the spirit, the church and the

*(Continued on page 10)*



# The Pastor and the Christian Family

An American Theological Professor has once said, 'There is evidence that the parish minister is on the front lines, in many places, in the struggle to help troubled families: Further, 'Although family education is very much more than giving help in trouble, it remains true that a minister worth his name continues to be for an average Christian family its friend, philosopher, and guide.' In this essay we intend to amplify the role of the pastor as a friend, philosopher and guide. However, before we do so, it may be well to say a word about the place of the pastor in the divine economy and in the Church's life.

During the last fifteen years the nature, function and pattern of the Church's Ministry have been the subject of many studies and consultations within and across Christian denominations and some radical thoughts have emerged. One has only to read a book like *'Why Priests?'* by the Roman Catholic theologian, *Hans King*, to see how changes are taking place even within conservative Christian circles. But certain thoughts about the ordained minister are generally acceptable to most Christians. These are:—

- (a) that he (or she also in some churches) is a person selected by the Church, suitably trained, and ordained by recognised Church authority or authorities;
- (b) He (or she) may be a full-time salaried person, or full-time person with no regular salary, or a part-time unsalaried person.
- (c) His (or her) main responsibilities are to lead the congregation or a group of congregations in worship (sacramental and non-sacramental), liturgical or non-liturgical and to provide pastoral care, which will include friendly visits to families, sick visitation, performing of ceremonies like engagement, marriage, baptism blessing of the house, burial etc. It can be easily seen even with this very cursory description of the function of the Pastor that most of his responsibilities and activities are connected with the families which constitute the congregation.

It is then under the responsibility of 'pastoral care' that we must consider the implications of the words 'friend, philosopher and guide', recognised that Christian ministry is derived from the ministry of our Lord, who was to those under His care a friend, philosopher and guide, and this was part of what made Him Saviour.

## The Pastor as a Friend to the Family

Friendship is one of the great gifts of God to humanity. There are very few individuals or families without some friends. But the word 'friend' has a variety of meanings, and we even speak of 'good' or 'bad' friends. As Christians we look to Jesus Christ as a perfect Friend, for He called His disciples His friends (John 15: 15) and His enemies called Him 'a friend of publicans and sinners' (Mt. 11: 19). What are the outstanding elements in our Lord's friendship which a pastor may try to emulate? At least the following:

- (a) The people in need knew that they could turn to Him in the hour of need (see Mt. 8: 5-18; John 2: 3; John 6: 37 etc.). This kind of friendship gives a sense of security and confidence to those who are befriended. We know what a comfort it is to a family to have a 'family doctor', and if the doctor is also a friend, what a difference it makes. A pastor cannot do everything, but for a family to have some one to turn to for comfort and advice is a veritable boon. I do not think all pastors realise what their friendship can mean to a family. Think of what Jesus's friendship meant to the Bethany family. John 11: 1-44.
- (b) Jesus was accessible and if possible available. A religious teacher could come to him at night (John 3: 1). A woman with illness could touch him in a throng (Mt. 9: 20). Children could jump into his lap (Mk. 10: 13-16) A leper could approach him, (Mk. 8: 2, Mt. 26: 6).

Immortal love, for ever full  
For ever flowing free,  
For ever shared, for ever whole,  
A never-ebbing sea.

One of the questions which a pastor has to ask himself at the outset of his ministry is: 'how accessible and available should I be to my congregation?' Any pastor following the footsteps of the Pastor of Pastors should know the answer. The sense of security and confidence which we have just mentioned is heightened in a family by the knowledge of accessibility and availability of the pastor. There are occasions in the life of a family when they need the help of the pastor as a matter of emergency. Not to be accessible and available is the most serious violation of the vows which the pastor takes at the time of his ordination.

- (c) The friendship which Jesus offered to people was to Him costly. In the account of the raising of Lazarus we read that when He saw Mary weeping, he was deeply moved in spirit and troubled. The Authorised Version says, 'he groaned in the spirit,' (John 11: 32). He said to His disciples, 'Great love has no man than this, that a man lay down his life for his friends.' And 'I lay down my life for the sheep' (John 15: 13; 10: 15).

Can we find a friend so faithful,  
Who will all our sorrows share?  
Jesus knows our every weakness—  
Take it to the Lord in Prayer.

A Pastor's life is not a bed of roses. Part of the cross he has to bear is the sharing of the sufferings of those under his care. The cost is not so much in terms of physical help but more in the anguish caused by a



person's or family's problems and sufferings. Sometimes even sharing the joys can be costly. This happened to our Lord too (see Luke 19 : 7). But any pastor who is not willing to pay the cost for his friendship, can hardly be called a shepherd this is what the word pastor means.

- (d) The final characteristic of our Lord's friendship that we should mention is its transforming power. Those who came under the influence of His friendship were never the same again. Simon became rock, (John 1 : 42), John, the son of thunder, became the apostle of love (Mk 3 : 17 ; 1 John 4 : 7-9). Zacchaeus the extortioner becomes a public benefactor (Luke 19 : 1-10). Of course, a pastor cannot claim the Master's transforming power, but there are many instances of families having been changed for good by the influence of the pastor. In the mass movement areas in the past we have known of changes that came over families as the pastor visited their homes and prayed with them. Family quarrels were settled, children became disciplined and huts became tidy and inviting. There is no limit to what a pastor's friendship can do for a family.

### **The Pastor as a Philosopher to the family**

The word 'philosopher', which simply means a friend or lover of wisdom, seems frightening because, the systems of philosophy which have developed can be understood and grasped by only a few. But in a true sense everybody in one way or another is a philosopher because God has made his heart hungry for wisdom, which is different from knowledge as such. Every one has some philosophy of life. Our Lord was the supreme philosopher, because He has by His life, teaching, death and resurrection brought to the world a philosophy of life. From His early days He displayed 'wisdom' (see Luke 2 : 47-52 ; Mt. 13 : 53-54 ; I Cor. 1 : 24). The Pastor because of his dedication, his training, his devotion and his experience has the unique opportunity of acquiring the wisdom with which he can help individuals and families. It is not surprising that individuals and families in the congregation do turn to him. Even through the foolishness of preaching he can communicate to his people the 'wisdom of God' (1 Cor. 1 : 18-25).

There are, however, three special ways in which the pastor can exercise his wisdom in relation to the family :—

- (a) Helping the family to inculcate within it the wisdom that springs from God-consciousness. In these days when the family can be too busy to pray and when the world is too much with us, it is the privilege of the pastor to remind and help the family to know that 'unless the lord build the house, those who build it labour in vain' (Psalm 127 : 1) and that 'the fear of the Lord is the beginning of wisdom' (Proverb. 9 : 10), that a home which builds itself up on the teachings of Jesus is like a house built upon a rock which can withstand the fury of the wind and the rain (Mt. 7 : 24-25). The wisdom has to be communicated not only by precept but by example. There is no greater service that a pastor can render to families than to show them the way of true godliness.

- (b) Helping the family to see the wisdom of responsible family life which will, of course, include planned parenthood, planned family budget, planned use of

activity and leisure. Of these at the present juncture the most important planning is the planning of the size of the family because it is deeply related to the health and welfare of the family as well as the health and welfare of the nation. 'Responsible parenthood' according to a conference of bishops, 'built on obedience to all the duties of marriage, requires a wise stewardship of the resources and abilities of the family as well as a thoughtful consideration of the needs and problems of society and the claims of the future generations'.

- (c) Helping the family to see the wisdom of being outward looking. A family which lives for itself may well die by itself. It has been well said that 'the family that would most truly help itself must help others'. Like its Master the family must be 'for others'. This outreach can take three forms : (i) A family helping another or other families ; (ii) helping in some community or national project ; (iii) Taking part in the Church's effort to communicate the Gospel. The wisdom of Christian hospitality has been exhorted in the Scriptures (Romans 12 : 13 etc.). Hospitality does not mean holding of 'parties'. It means providing a place and an atmosphere where others can feel at home and become open to new ideas and activities. By whatever way the family serves others, it becomes part of the life abundant which our Lord came to impart. The family in this sense can become, in the words of Canon Warren, 'a microcosm of the true community which can transform a neighbourhood, revive a nation and save a world'.

Happy and blessed is the pastor who having 'spiritual, wisdom and understanding' (Col. 1 : 9) can impart to the families under his care 'the wisdom that comes from above.'

### **The Pastor as a Guide to the Family**

A Pastor follows One who is the Way (John 14 : 6). He practises a religion, whose original name was The Way (Acts 9 : 2, Acts 19 : 9). A guide is one who shows the way. This is one of the most privileged of the pastor's responsibilities. Of the three aspects of his role which we have been considering in relation to the family, this has the greatest practical implications. Let us mention just a few to illustrate this aspect of the pastoral ministry, remembering that this does not assume that he has all the answers or the solutions or skills to deal with questions that come before him. One of the important aspects of the pastoral ministry is called 'referral', which means referring to experts. There are many problems facing a family which should be referred to those who have the necessary expertise and skill. What then, are some of the practical ways in which a pastor can guide the family ?

- (a) In almost every family crises, tensions, conflicts can arise. If he is trained in 'family counselling', well and good, and he can handle many situations. In some cases he may have to take the help of a professional counsellor, a doctor or a psychiatrist. If he does not possess the skill to handle situations of this kind, he can guide the family or the individual members concerned to where they can get the necessary help. This ministry of 'referral' is as important as the capacity to deal with matters personally.

- (b) There are matters in which the pastor himself, if he has been suitably trained, will be able to

(Continued on p. 2)



# *'The National Gains of the Recent Political Developments'*

It has been a common remark of overseas observers of the Indian scene as well as of many political thinkers within the country, that democracy in India was only a political 'gimmick' of the highly educated and the Western oriented section of its people and that the common man in India was most indifferent to politics and the political system. Questions relating to democracy and its workings were not relevant to the issues of food, shelter and clothing with which the common people of India were intimately concerned. This scepticism was so wide spread that even Smt. Indira Gandhi believed it and thought that the wiping out of democracy would not make any difference to her popularity among the masses and that they were indifferent to the political system in the country. It, therefore, came as a great revelation when, in the elections in 1977, the common people of India showed that they believed in democracy and that democracy was absolutely necessary to continue their struggle for a better living standard and for greater justice and equity. It showed how far removed the political thinkers were from the common man and how they had utterly failed to appreciate and understand the working of the minds of the common people. The results of the 1977 election were an assertion of the people's 'felt need' for democracy and the democratic norms in the Government of the country.

The lesson came as a surprise to all those engaged actively in politics. The verdict at the polls of the people, prompted a chastened Mrs. Gandhi to declare that India would not need imposition of emergency for a thousand years to come. That is a way of promising to the people that, if she came to power, she would not again impose 'Emergency' and of accepting the people's verdict in favour of the democratic system of government and of falling in tune with it.

After the election, the Janata Government was formed. It was an experiment with alignment of certain political parties. It gave to the country one of the most competent teams of Government we have had in recent times. Most of them were new to the seats of power and they brought to the Government a refreshingly new look and thinking. It was said that for the first time, a Cabinet form of Government functioned at Delhi. The Ministers were given considerable

freedom within their own Ministries and major decisions were taken collectively after discussion at the Cabinet level. The genuine non-aligned policy followed by the erstwhile Janata Government too acquired a new meaning and was not without a new content. The Industrial Relations Bill moved before the Parliament is the first attempt for passing a comprehensive enactment on the subject. These are all signs of vigour and freshness after 30 years of 'stale' policies. This was a significant gain in the working and form of Government.

Furthermore, for the first time, the socialists and the Gandhians tried to find a synthesis in their ways of thinking to bring relief and succour to the people below the poverty line. Even those committed champions of the interests of the urban working class, started to question how long and to what extent the working class should be appeased at the cost of the poorer sections of the country as a whole and to what extent they should be asked to share the responsibility of the development of those below the poverty line. This was yet another gain of the recent developments.

Although India has been advocating Gandhian principles and ideology, now for the first time, the Government accepted as a policy bar on manufacture with machines what can be produced by hands. Large scale industries were to keep out of the field which can be covered efficiently by small scale industries. Mahatma Gandhi had preached this 60 years ago. Even the intellectuals in the Western countries and those who could look ahead, now see the wisdom in what Mahatma Gandhi advocated. The Janata Government accepted this as its official policy. Although India has been witnessing the growth of the textile mills and the consequent starvation of a large number of handloom weavers, the previous Government had continued to encourage the textile mills influenced by the big capitalists' powerful lobby. For the first time, the Janata Government froze the weaving capacity of the huge textile mills in the country and assured the handloom weavers that all the additional requirements of textiles would be allotted to the handloom sector and the Khadi (handspun and handwoven) sector. A similar policy was followed in regard to the Match industry. All this was done with a definite policy of promoting employment opportunities among the poorer sections of the community, although it incidentally entailed loss of a few jobs among those who are in the top-income brackets. For the first time, the Government declared as a policy that greater resources should be diverted to the rural areas, recognising that 80% of the people live there. This was not a mere slogan. Excise duty on fertilisers was appreciably reduced; excise duty payable by the growers of tobacco was abolished. The poor tobacco growers in the villages heaved a sigh of relief that for the first time they find the true meaning of a 'Free country', so much was their suffering under the tyranny of the excise officialdom. Although 20% of the people live in urban areas and 80% of the people live in rural areas, the resources of India have been spent on the basis of 80 : 20 between the urban and rural areas. For the first time it has been decided to spend at least 40% in the rural areas and to increase it in course of time to parity.

Thus, although the Janata Government did not take long strides forward, it gave a proper direction to India's economic development. Failure to take long



strides disappointed many, but the proper direction taken by the Government gave hopes to quite a few. Unfortunately the arrangements that supported the coalition preceding the forming of the Janata Party, could not last long. The constituents differed on certain fundamental issues. Some of the parties or groups within the Janata Party felt that the Jan Sangh was not playing the game and the R.S.S. elements in the Jan Sangh with their fascist tendencies were seeking to infiltrate into the seats of power. There is nothing progressive about what they stand for, not any humanism in what they advocate. They want to restore the orthodox and obscurantist ancient order of India in its pristine purity.

The toppling of the Governments in Bihar and U.P., was accepted as a proof of the policy of the Jan Sangh. Mr. Morarji Desai's full support to the Jan Sangh and his open support to the Freedom of Religion Bill, moved by Mr. O. P. Tyagi and in fact encouraged by Mr. Desai, were taken as a proof of the increasing preponderance of the communal forces inside the Janata Party and the need to break it to save the country from falling a prey to the RSS manoeuvres. The formation of parallel trade union movements by the RSS to break the traditional trade union movements also added to the fear that the RSS had a definite scheme to capture power. Even the suspicion that the RSS had a hand in the riots that took place in Jamshedpur and the failure of Mr. Morarji Desai to visit immediately the places of riot for infusing a sense of confidence among the minority communities, added to their sense of insecurity. A number of representations were made to the Prime Minister Mr. Morarji Desai, but he displayed a total disregard bordering on arrogance in dealing with them. The power he had enjoyed in the 27 months had intoxicated him and he had become blind. These developments naturally led to the breaking of the political parties and of the Janata Government at the Centre.

These struggles within the group for power were discussed on the basis of communalism versus secularism. Until recently the concept of secularism was thought of as a Western concept introduced into the Indian constitution and the Government by Pandit Nehru and other Western oriented intellectuals of India. For the first time in India, secularism and communalism were discussed by the common people of India. The extreme communal elements started to get isolated in the political field. So much so, even the Jan Sangh and the RSS openly declared that their aim was not to establish a theocratic state but a secular state. This was an acknowledgement of the commitment of the common people in India to secularism as against communalism. The people recall the tradition of India where people of different communities and regions lived in amity and unity. There could be no future for the country unless the people are committed to the ideals of secularism and where people of all religions and communities and regions could participate with equal enthusiasm in the national life. Thus for the first time, there has been an assertion of secularism by the common man in India. This again is a positive gain to the secular values of the country.

As a result of the breaking of the political parties Mr. Morarji Desai lost the majority in the parliament and the president called Mr. Charan Singh, who had the support of a greater number of people, to form the Government. In all these moves and counter-

moves, what is important to observe is that the Rules of the Constitution were meticulously followed. There was no ad hocism, but a strict adherence to the Constitution and commitment to the rule of law. Although these rules proved to be a source of inconvenience and embarrassment to people with political ambitions, the Rules were accepted as a part of the game. Thus the acceptance of the rule of law even in a moment of bitter struggle for power, is yet another positive gain in the recent political turmoil.

For the first time, many people recognised that although the Constitution has been drafted exhaustively and meticulously it could not provide for all eventualities and contingencies. The Jurists in vain searched for precedents from England and for words of wisdom from eminent British Jurists like Sir Ivor Jennings. It was recognised that the President is not a mere rubber stamp but is holding an important office calling for the highest measure of wisdom in periods of crisis and uncertainties and he was required to be just and fair and appear to be so. Indian Leaders had to innovate according to the prevailing circumstances, situations and conditions. This would certainly help the Indian intellectuals and Lawyers to get out of their present intellectual enslavement to look for legal precedents and wisdom from elsewhere.

What led to Mr. Desai's downfall was his own making. Mr. Desai was arrogant and it arose from orthodoxy, obscurantism and self-righteousness which bred contempt for others. The foreign trips only added to his self-esteem. Instead of developing an open-mindedness and humility, which would have carried him through, he became haughty with power. He pooh-poohed the leaders of Amnesty International and expressed that international public opinion was of no consequence, little acknowledging that his release from imprisonment and the election held by Mrs. Gandhi were the result of international public opinion created by movements like Amnesty International. He brushed aside the Christian leaders who expressed their apprehensions on certain matters. He asked those within the party and who supported the Nepali language to get out of the party if they could not support him and the only reason he gave was that the 'Nepali language' was foreign. Whether a language was foreign or not is not relevant, but what should have been considered was whether there are enough number of people whose mother tongue is the language in question justifying constitutional support.

He tried to browbeat the Pondicherry people that it would be annexed to Tamil Nadu, notwithstanding India's covenant with France not to disturb Pondicherry's legal status without the consent of the local people. The Janata party promised to decentralise power and this was given the go by when he introduced prohibition in Pondicherry through the backdoor during President's rule. This was a betrayal of the Janata manifesto.

Mr. Morarji Desai had obviously calculated that power is the greatest cementing factor in Indian politics and, therefore, his tenure in office for five years would not be disturbed. Political developments overtook his calculations. So far in India, a Prime Minister was removed from office only by death or by people's vote and this was the first time a Prime Minister has been removed by the Parliamentary process. This is a salutary lesson for the future Prime Minister not to



take the office for granted on the basis of the certainty of a five year's tenure.

Late Pandit Nehru was made to believe by his sycophants that his service as Prime Minister was indispensable and that the country would go to ruins without him. Mrs. Indira Gandhi too believed that she was the only leader in India to adorn the high office in a befitting manner. Strangely Mr. Morarji Desai too believed that he was the only leader eminent and able enough in the present time to hold the high office. Now at last the leaders know only too well that in a country of 600 million people with a reasonably high standard of education and rich political experience, there are a number of claimants for the high office and still more aspirants to it and many more who have dreams for it as it ought to be in a democratic set up. Therefore, no longer could any one claim that he alone is uniquely fitted to hold the high office. This is a further evidence of the maturity of Indian democracy.

The Freedom of Religion Bill provides another classical example of how a Prime Minister should not behave. The simple Christians of the tribal area made representations to the Prime Minister of the hardship they were subject to under the Arunachal Pradesh Freedom of Religion Act. Instead of listening with sympathy or making enquiries of the hardship they were subject to Mr. Desai pontifically stated that there should be an Act similar to it for the whole of the country. It was not part of either the party manifesto or the decision of the Cabinet or the Government, but he was anxious to rebuff the simple Christian folk in order to receive applause from the communal elements in his camp. Encouraged by this, Mr. O. P. Tyagi moved the private members bill. Mr. Desai, became only more and more stubborn on the issue, although many leaders within his own party stigmatised it as communal and unconstitutional. He was determined to play the role of a hero in a Greek tragedy. The subject was discussed widely throughout the length and breadth of the country and the country itself got divided into 'communalists' and 'secularists' and he found himself in a small group of communalists. The greater number within the majority community itself asserted the tradition of tolerance and amity and unity among all the sections of the country. Thus the Prime Minister got himself isolated along with a tiny group of extreme communalists. The isolation of the extreme group in Indian Politics is perhaps one of the significant gains.

One more factor that may be mentioned is that hitherto in all political developments, the Christians and other small minority groups have been only passive spectators accepting the results of the developments with indifference and apathy. This is the first time, when the change took place, even the minority groups such as the Christians felt that they too played their role in the national politics. The participation of the different communities is yet another long step in the right direction.

Above all, the greatest gain is what people have been able to see the politicians in their true aspirations. The people now understand that the politicians are in the political field in pursuit of power. The people of India who were once used to the now forgotten band

of patriots who joined the Congress movement to fight for freedom, now vainly looked for politicians willing to sacrifice for a noble cause. Now it is well understood by everyone concerned that politics is a game in pursuit of power on the basis of the ideology a politician advocates, although may have no ideology at all. This down to earth assessment of the politicians will help the people in future to weight carefully the question as to whom they should entrust with power for guiding the destiny of the country. Instead of being blinded by idealism or becoming acceptal or cynical, a sense of realism should guide them in choosing their leaders. Hero worship and democracy go ill together. The leaders should be understood and accepted as they are with their strength and weakness, their commitment to ideology with their desire for power, their greatness with their sinfulness. Let them be judged by their ideology, and their record of service. If so, this will be the greatest gain of the recent political strife.

E. D. DEVADASAN.

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### If the Salt Loses. . . .—(Continued from page 5)

Kingdom is a reflection of the incarnation. There is a decisive difference, for the human person of Christ was so identified with the divine as to be sinless, and this does not happen in the church. But there are likenesses. Just as the divine nature of Christ was known by faith and invisible to the majority, so the divine constitution of the church is not self-evident to non-believers. Just as many voices, followers and friends would have led Jesus away from his true vocation, so the church is distracted at every turn of history from its essential tasks. So we need to ask, in this paper, when we see so many signs of weakness, corruption, 'flesh' in the life of the church, what signs are there that it is still the body of Christ? Are these signs the classical ones of the sacraments, the bible, the ministry? Or are they signs of character and quality, love, joy, peace? Or are they signs of conversions, growth, adventure? It is possible for a church to be so corrupted that, like flavourless salt, it is good for nothing but to be thrown out as rubbish? Is there a promise that the gates of hell will never conquer?

As we think of these things we are also led to ask questions about the nature of the Christian life. Perhaps the corruptions of the church are part of its infancy, its early mistakes on the way, signs of immaturity in our discipleship. But if we follow that way of thinking, are we not in danger of ignoring the biblical word of new birth in Christ, the new creation in the spirit? Can we not say 'We are Christians now', or do we always have to say 'We hope to be Christians one day'? The former is closer to the New Testament. We cannot let the sins of the church destroy our conviction that God has called us in Christ, that we have responded in faith, and that he is with us in our pilgrimage. Our hope, as we try to see the corruptions of the church today, is in the renewing power of Christ, who took our corruptions to himself, and felt their pain and knows their futility, and yet lives to welcome us in the Kingdom.

BERNARD THOROGOOD.



# The legacy of Sadhu Sunder Singh

*'There is a deep commitment to Christ among the Indian believers. One example shows why? Sadhu Sunder Singh was born on September 3, 1889, into an aristocratic Sikh family . . . And like so many others, he was overwhelmed and turned around by Jesus Christ. Sunder Singh became a Christian missionary (evangelist) . . .'*

(Roger C. Palms, Editor, Decision Magazine Oct., 1977).

Ninety years ago Sunder Singh was born at village Rampur in Ludhiana District, Punjab.

Fifty years ago he disappeared in the mighty Himalayas while on an evangelism expedition into forbidden Tibet which still remains forbidden and inaccessible.

Sunder Singh is my number one mentor. I have been deeply inspired by his simplicity, singleness of purpose, evangelistic zeal and complete devotion to the living person of Christ. What surprises me is how a man with little education and rustic background was able to attract the attention of kings, queens, archbishops, rich and poor.

His memory is still fresh in east and west. I have read short accounts of his life mentioned in many books, magazines, newspapers, weeklies and mission reports. Many outstanding Christians—Dr. E. Stanley Jones, Bishop Stephen Neill, and Billy Graham, Akbar Abdul Haqq—quote his example in their sermons.

He is the first Third World evangelist who was accepted by the West. Stephen Neill says that the Ashram movement has arisen 'under the inspiration of the Sadhu's example'.

He was in great demand and used to get about 600 invitations every year from different corners of the world.

'The most famous of all Indian Christians, Sadhu Sunder Singh,' writes Stephen Neill, 'by his wandering life of extreme simplicity and by direct appeal of his devotional writings had convinced many for the first time that India had something new to contribute to the knowledge of Christ. Interest in the work of Sadhu continued long after his disappearance in 1929.'

The highest tribute is paid to him by Sir Francis Younghusband, the first British Officer to lead an expedition into Tibet:

*'There were four famous Indians who represented the true spirit of India in the West and no Indian was better known in the West except them in the first quarter of the 20th century. They were Tagore, Gandhi, Radhakrishnan and Sadhu Sunder Singh. The last one gained European reputation as a mystic.'*

(Dawn in India, 1930).

Except Sunder no other Indian uptill now had the privilege of addressing seven hundred clergy of the Church of England, at London, in 1920, in the presence of six bishops and Archbishop of Canterbury. The main point of his address was true catholic spirit and oneness in Christ.

On May 29, 1920, the Sadhu Spoke at union Theological Seminary in New York. After fulfilling engagements in many states Sunder left for Australia. On August 17, 1920, he addressed a meeting of 700 clergy in the grounds of St. Andrews Cathedral, Sydney.

In the second half of the 20th century, God has raised another man from Punjab whose call is to be a roving evangelist. He is an intellectual and is worthy son of a famous preacher whom I had heard many times at Sialkot Convention. His name is Akbar Abdul Haqq, an Associate Evangelist of Billy Graham, particularly assigned to India. He is a worthy successor of Sunder Singh.

Some may raise a question as to why I am writing about past things and past men. I am compelled and forced by a biblical injunction to write. 'Remember your former leaders, who spoke God's message to you. Think back on how they lived and died, and imitate their faith.' (Hebrews 13: 7 TEV.)

During seventies many instances came into my notice in India and abroad which make the life of Sunder Singh vibrant and dynamic and so significant today.

In May-June, 71, I attended the Third International Conference of Officers' Christian Union, in West Germany. I was surprised that many delegates were keen to know about Sunder Singh.

During my visit to Berlin, in June, 1971, I found that Sunder's memory is still fresh in the hearts of German people. They seem to be his great friends. My hostess, Frau Wangemann brought out two books in German written about Sunder Singh, by the distinguished theologian Frederick Heiler. I saw those books and was deeply moved. I felt that this was a visible and concrete sign of his witness. She told me that she had seen Sunder Singh in 1922 when he spoke at many places. Her impressions are:

*'Sunder Singh's Christlike appearance, his yellow robe, his swinging gait, his height, his radiant eyes, his neatness; his naturalness, his simple and well-illustrated sermons, all distinguished him and marked him to be revered and followed.'*

Rev. Dr. William Lillie, noted ethic scholar, vice-principal Murray College, Sialkot, now in eighties,

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# 'Seek The Lord And Live'

(The forthcoming NCCI Assembly)

'Seek the Lord and live' (Amos 5:6) is the theme of the forthcoming quadrennial Assembly of the National Christian Council of India, to be held at the St. Stephen's College, Delhi, October 4-8. Seeking Christ has become an issue of great importance to Christians and others in India. In fact the liberty for seeking Christ and for accepting him as the Lord is the apple of discord around which the 'freedom of religion' issue was discussed. The Assembly will study and discuss this theme in detail.

There will be three main addresses: *The Church as Christ's Instrument for the Transformation of the Indian Society* (Dr. C. T. Kurien, Madras); *Discerning Christ in the Life of the Indian Church Today* (Bishop S. K. Parmar, Bombay); *Christian Witness in the Fluid Situation in North East India* (Mrs. Rane Shaiza, ex-M.P., Nagaland). The Assembly will break up into six Commissions and study sub-themes on topics of current concern for the Church in India—(1) Fellowship and Dialogue, (2) Unity, (3) Meaning of Mission Today (4) New Styles of Christian Action (Pluralistic forms of witness), (5) National issues (Social legislations, Freedom of religion, Harijan issue, Minorities etc). There will be a separate Commission to consider the draft of the new Constitution.

This Assembly is specially important because it is hoped that the National Christian Council will be formally transformed into a National Council of Churches. Plans for this change were in the offing for quite a while and the Assembly in 1975 gave an overall approval to go ahead. An amended and updated draft Constitution will go before the Assembly for consideration and approval. A draft approved by the Executive Committee has been circulated to the member bodies for their comments. The new Constitution has incorporated into it the suggestions of the NCCI Evaluation Commission with regard to aims and basis, and structural changes.

Never before has the NCCI Assembly been held at Delhi, the capital of India. This could be symbolic in the sense that the new Council will address itself to the transformed historical situation in India and will be more concerned with national issues and problems, and not just limit the work for the welfare of Christians alone. The Church in India is a minority serving a majority, in different ways.

In the frustrating situation in which the country is today where national politics has lost all direction, there has to be groups of people who would be a beacon of light, who would gasp the lantern of hope and show the way forward. The Church is to be such a community of hope, transmitting hope all around.

A Study book on the theme of the Assembly entitled '*Seeking Christ In India Today*' has been published and this book will be the basic study document for the Assembly, together with the Reports of the Secretaries and the Working Papers for the Commissions included in the Assembly Handbook—'*From Nagpur to Delhi*'. The study book is meant also to be used by the churches at the congregational level. The focus of the book is on the existential situation of the Church in India today. To quote from the introduction to the book: 'If the Church is to be true to its Lord, it must frequently look at itself, review its work and witness, and examine its relation to the society and culture in which it lives. The Church should always be *ecclesia semper reformanda*—a constantly reforming Church. The essential nature of the Church is not to be found in some Platonic heaven of ideas, but in its own history and in the interaction of that history with the world around it as guided by its Lord.'

The writers of the book call for a new theological dynamic which should emanate from the Church's encounter with the 'soul' of India. It sees the need for a new apologetics, and new avenues of service which will embody a willingness to renounce triumphalism. It asks the Church and Christians to have fundamental solidarity with the poor of the country and help the nation in having a new hierarchy of values. The Church's being and quality of life are important as a spiritual base for its social and evangelistic mission. 'What is needed is a new ecclesial self-understanding i.e. the Church's understanding of itself in the depths of its being, by being true to itself, its context and its Lord. Then only can the Church in India hope to be a true representative of Jesus Christ'. You are urged to read this book. Copies are available from the C.L.S., P.O. Box 501, Park Town, Madras 600 003. (Price: Rs. 5.)

The Assembly is not just a juridical body of its affiliated bodies (23 Churches, 14 Regional Christian Councils, 15 all India organisations). It is also the quadrennial meeting of the leaders of the Churches and Christian Organisation in India. It acts as the cumulative voice of the Christian enterprise in India, gathered together in council, to discuss the current concerns of the churches—problems, possibilities, frustrations, fears, hopes. Here is the primary expression of the ecumenical movement in India, seeking light that would enable the churches to consciously choose lines of action that are meaningful to the socio-cultural, political and spiritual context in which they are placed in India today.

The Assembly is a get-together. J. H. Oldham, one of the pioneers of the ecumenical movement has said, 'real life is meeting'—meeting people, meeting ideas. The Assembly is a 'meeting' in the deep sense of the word; an occasion to make ourselves contemporaneous with our own history—updating, correcting, counselling, guiding.

—MATHAI ZACHARIAH.



# News from the Dioceses

## REPORT OF THE ALL INDIA CHRISTIAN EDUCATION SEMINAR

At the All India Christian Education Seminar, the first ever sponsored by the Christian Education Department of the Evangelical Fellowship of India (CEEFI) was held in Hyderabad, August 15-18, 1979. \*Forty delegates (most of whom were official representatives) from eight denominations, eight Christian Organisations and five theological institutions studied in depth on the theme: *The Church in India: Called to Teach*. Various facets of Christian Education and in particular its significance in the life of the local church and Christian home were covered in the Seminar.

We, the participants felt that there was an urgent need to make the local churches recognise that Christian Education is for the total congregation and that it is not to be confined just to children as popularly understood. We further noted that the Christian Education materials used should be Bible-based, Christ-centred and context-oriented.

We, therefore, humbly call upon the church:

1. To formulate a criteria for evaluation of Christian Education materials available in the country in terms of theology, pedagogy and learner-relatedness and to choose the best of these for use in the educational ministry of the local churches;
2. To encourage local churches to set up or activate the organisational administrative structures to carry forward their Christian Education programmes;
3. To bring together periodically parents and Christian educators of the local church for fellowship, interaction and evaluation of the effectiveness of the Christian Education Programmes;
4. To recognise the useful role played by small groups for Bible Study, Prayer, Fellowship and Service and (a) to encourage their formation under the oversight of the local church (b) to arrange training seminars on small groups for this purpose and (c) to make available suitable literature for the use of these groups;
5. To convene family life seminars that would highlight the importance of family worship and other elements that would help in building strong Christian homes;
6. To provide library facilities for the congregations and to encourage their members to cultivate the habit of reading sound Christian literature;
7. To set apart personnel specially for Christian Education at the local/Diocesan or Conference level.
8. To avail of the varied services of Christian Education agencies now existing in India and
9. To provide regular training at the local level for Christian Education personnel and counsellors in the areas of Bible-teaching and family concerns such as budgeting, vocational guidance, planning for the future, pre-marital counselling, social concern etc.

We also call upon the Christian Organisation:

1. To assist the local churches in conducting training programmes;
2. To co-ordinate their own ministries so as to serve the Church in India more effectively;
3. To provide ample instruction on the necessity and importance of Christian Education when some of them sponsor Pastors' Conferences; and

4. To provide relevant literature on the cultural and contextual implications for Christian Education.

We further call upon theological institutions:

1. To produce articles and books suitable for meeting the needs of Christian Education in the Church in India; and
2. To include Christian Education as a part of their major curricula.

We repent of our past failure to have fully fostered the nurture and growth of the Church in India. We would, therefore, in the enablement of the Spirit, commit ourselves to this glorious task until Christ's people are filled to the full with Christ's own fullness (Ephesians 4: 13).

\*The participants were from:

— The Church of North India, The Church of South India, The Methodist Church, The Baptist Church, The Mennonite Church, The United Basel Mission, The Brethren Assembly and The Christian and Missionary Alliance.

— The Bible Club Movement of India, The Child Evangelism Fellowship of India, India Youth For Christ, The Christian Education Dept. of the Evangelical Fellowship of India, Vacation Bible School Ministries, The Scripture Union, The Association for Theological Education by Extension and The Christian Nationals' Evangelism Commission.

— Andhra Christian Theological College, Hyderabad, Leonard Theological College, Jabalpur, Clark Theological College, Nagaland, South India Bible Seminary, Bangarapet and The Mennonite Bible Institute, Shamshabad.

## KARNATAKA NORTHERN DIOCESE

### Ordination Service at Holy Trinity Church, Bellary

The Rt. Rev. W. V. Karl, Bishop in Karnataka Northern Diocese, along with the presbyters, ordained Revds. J. Padmakar, D. David, B. R. Sarvade, J. P. Kasturi, E. S. Murnal, P. John and K. B. Gundi as Presbyters on Sunday the 26th August 1979 at Holy Trinity Church, Bellary.

On 24th and 25th, a retreat was conducted for the ordinands at Holy Trinity Church.

Rev. J. M. Jogula, Presbyter in-charge of Hosur Church, Hubli and of All Saints Church, Dharwar gave talks on 'Presbyter's Devotional Life' and 'Sermon preparation'. Bishop Karl gave explanatory talks on the Constitution of the Church of South India, of the Karnataka Northern Diocese, Marriage Laws, Baptism and Book of Common Worship.

Bishop L. V. Azariah, Bishop in Rayalaseema Diocese led the retreat on 25th. His talks were inspiring and very helpful to the Presbyters.

The ordination service was attended by different church members and the church was fully packed.

Bishop L. V. Azariah preached the ordination Sermon, Rev. B. Bhaskar, Chairman, Bellary area Council helped in the Service as the Bishop's Chaplain.

Rev. P. J. P. Chandrasekhar, Presbyter in-charge of Holy Trinity Church attended to arrangements for the Ordination service. The Holy Trinity Pastorate Committee hosted a dinner for the ordinands, their families and guests.

Rev. J. M. JOGULA.



## Last Month's Programme

The Lay Preachers Committee has been active in conducting examinations to clear up a long back log of those who had begun the training several years ago. Several have now been recommended for Bishop's Licence. Some others have started the training. We are grateful for this service of the Lay Preachers without whom many services could not be regularly held.

The Nurture and Witness Committee at its last meeting for the biennium reviewed its work with some satisfaction. This Committee represents a great variety of work—Sunday Schools, Evangelism, Youth Work, Dramatics, Audio Visual Aid, Women's Fellowship, Professional Workers Fellowship, Lay Preachers. Most of the work is done through Sub-Committees covering these aspects. Sunday School Teachers training courses have been successfully completed in the Tumkur and K.G.F. Areas.

The Bangalore Ministers Conference was held at the Bible Society where we were reminded of the importance of this work. We were also put to shame at the lack of support from the Churches. Very few are sending their collections on Bible Sunday. I hope all Pastorates will take note of this. We were also given a very graphic picture of the Church in North East India which despite severe opposition has grown very strong. May be a bit of persecution would also stir us up from our complacency.

The Board of the CSI Vocational Centre, Tumkur has been having several sessions studying an evaluation report produced by an independent agency of the Synod. The Board and the staff are seeking to keep the Centre aware of the challenges of today and alive to the trends of tomorrow. There is an openness to change where it is needed and also to build the heritage of the past.

St. John's High School celebrated the 125th Anniversary with the Governor of Karnataka as the Chief Guest. Here is a School with a rich heritage which is also endeavouring to keep in tune with present-day needs.

A very profitable morning was spent with all Presbyters-in-Charge, Secretaries and Treasurers of Pastorates. The main issue was the support of the ministry. Many members made very positive contributions. About 125 people were present and this represented a very good cross section of leadership in the Diocese. Recommendations were made for a complete restructuring of the means of support for the ordained ministry from Pastorates. Since this has the backing of all the Pastorates it should be successful.

I have been advocating House fellowships in all my pastoral visits. This is particularly relevant in Bangalore where members from the various Churches are widely scattered. These House groups should cross Church barriers. In one street there are members belonging to several Churches. They can get together in these fellowships to share their faith and concerns. These will in no way detract from commitment of members to their own church. On the other hand members will become more alive to their faith and committed to their respective Churches. There should be hundreds of such fellowships in Bangalore. Here again comes the importance of Lay Training to lead these groups. The clergy cannot run all these groups. Nor should they. Their task is to train lay leaders for this role.

The annual Retreat for Junior Ministers was held at Christa Jyothi Seminary. Very good facilities were offered by the Seminary. The leader was Rev. A. C.

Oommen who for many years has been Chaplain at C.M.C., Vellore. He has a wealth of pastoral experience. He has recently been appointed as full-time Coordinator of the Synod Pastoral Aid Department. We look forward to this being a means of revitalising the ordained ministry.

## MANGALORE DIOCESE

Sir,

The following event took place quite some time back. But after receiving so many positive reactions from various sides I felt that you still might be interested to hear about it:

In order to give their students a practical introduction into problems of rural development the Karnataka Theological College sent them for 2 weeks to the Agricultural Training Centre (C.S.I.) in Siddanabavi, 40 km away from Hubli-Dharwad.

End of October they came from Mangalore. In Siddanabavi the rice harvest just started. On the first morning therefore all the 18 students were given a sickle. The two accompanying professors also asked for one and so we went and cut a half a farmers day long rice and laid it down carefully on the ground to dry in the sun. After a half an hour many faces showed glistening pearls of sweat and before one hour was over someone was asking with a sigh, when there would be some rest and a drink of water. After pointing out to the fact that the temperature was now actually very pleasant at the end of the rainy season compared with other times of the year everybody continued and tried his best till the midmorning break—and continued afterwards to do so upto noon. Before returning home we looked over to the field next to us, where during the same time just 6 labourers had also been harvesting. Their harvested area looked only slightly smaller when compared with the one the 21 of us had cut!

Thus the subject for the afternoon's teaching in the classroom was laid out: 'Give us this day our daily bread' and 'Ora et Labora' (pray and work), the guideline of Benedict of Nursia, the founder of the order of the Benedictines. But first we remembered that the workers were again out in the field bending their back and cutting rice for an other half day! One of the main points was to show, how Jesus brought a real new, revolutionary attitude towards work: 'I have not come to be served but to serve.' This was very much contrasting with the attitude of those days towards manual labour, which was regarded as something inferior, second class. The apostle Paul then took up the same idea in several places of his epistles (Acts 20: 32-35; 1. Cor. 4: 12; 1. Thess. 4: 11-12 etc.) and a few centuries later this Benedict of Nursia created the above-mentioned guideline for his monastery.

Through all such teaching a quiet, slow, but steady revolution was initiated in all those countries around the Mediterranean Sea which did not take place in non-Christian countries. In the contrary, in India e.g. with its caste system the old attitude was preserved, it became even more accentuated. Therefore the big and very important task before the pastors: To give back to all the people around them this sense for dignity of manual labour. But this they can achieve only, if they themselves overcome the old opinions and are willing to work also with their hands instead of merely ordering others to do so. And only after having been sweating a half day long in the field—like this morning—and thereby observing how the daily labourers achieved



much more than they themselves, then they will also learn to respect what they are doing.

During the 3 subsequent mornings we tried to give a short introduction into vegetable growing, because generally not enough vegetables are grown out in the villages, or only during certain periods of the year and because also the little space required is very often available behind most of the houses, also behind the parsonages. During the first morning every one had to dig and prepare a vegetable bed, collecting first cowdung to mix it into the soil. The second morning all about sowing and transplanting was practised and the third morning aftercare, that is proper watering, weeding, mulching etc.

At the end of the course every one had to write down in short what he felt had been most important for him. One answer was: 'This thought struck me most, that if a pastor goes out to the farmers and helps them here and there in emergency cases to cope with some urgent work, the farmers in return might become really interested to listen to what this pastor had to say on a Sunday about the Gospel.' An other one wrote: 'I am a son of a farmer. But still, I do not know much about agriculture. I never had to help out in the fields during my schoolholidays. I realized nowonly that the cultivation of crops, the production of our daily food is not such an easy thing. When I took the sickle in my hand for cutting rice I was in good mood. But after a few minutes I began to become nervous and I realised how hard such work is. What will we be doing once when we become pastors? I asked myself. Will we only be talking nicely 'you do this and you do that' and let the farmers alone get the feeling how tired one gets while doing all the manual work expected?' These few sentences confirm once more our previous observations, that young people very soon forget the conditions of village life, when for the purpose of schooling they come to live for a few years in hostels in the towns.

Later during the course we also tried to give some ideas about the different ways of approaching people whom we would like to help. And, we also asked, how does 'the good shepherd' look like in 1970, 1980 there out in the villages? What could he do, what should he do? Observations during the very same course furnished the practical connections. At the end of the first Sunday service the students had taken up a tiny so to say development programme. They distributed pamphlets just about to everybody attending the service. 'Did you ask all those to whom you gave these pamphlets, whether they could also read what you gave them?' Nobody had thought about this simple little point.

After several such practical introductions into various spheres we visited some nearby projects and then drove on the second Sunday to a big but remote village with a small Christian congregation in order to exercise what it could mean 'not to preach only'. After the service we sat together with the villagers under a tree and asked and listened. While doing so a shocking, hard to believe story came to light. Most of those farmers attending had good land and together in one block by the side of a river. Due to ignorance they got into the fangs of a cunning money-lender when they searched for somebody who could help them irrigate their fields. He gave them a pump, but since then they are so much indebted to him, that they can no more forsee how ever to pay off their debts and get free again as before. When all this started, where was then the village pastor, 'the good shepherd' of 1970, who should have been able to prevent such a shady

deal? It's only a small congregation after all, and any pastor with even a minimum contact with the parish should have come to know about the important step those farmers were contemplating.

Like this, during those 2 weeks we discovered so many opportunities for a pastor to become an agent for rural development—without talking and thinking about this much used expression—merely by doing what he was preaching on Sundays, by transforming for instance the parables of the 'Good Shepherd' of the 'Good Samaritan' into today's life.

I for myself wondered, why the Church with its Theological Colleges seems to discover now as something fairly new the need to expose the students in the above-mentioned manner to the practical life they will be facing after their training? But let us be very much thankful that such reorientation is taking place. And let us pray also, that it is carried through in the proper way, that for example we do not become, as one other extreme, just busy organisers of welfare schemes, only, thereby neglecting the spiritual needs of life.

J. STAHELIN.

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### The legacy of Sadhu. . . .—(Continued from page 11)

wrote to me from Aberdeen that he had seen Sunder as a young man at Sialkot Convention.

A well-known student of Dr. Lillie, Aziz Willam, Bishop of Amritsar, says that at 15 he had seen Sunder Singh.

My father and my grandfather Niaz Ali (First Elder of the Presbyterian Mission at Sialkot) had seen him and often told stories about Sunder Singh.

At St. Stephen College, Delhi, he enjoyed the friendship of two men—C. F. Andrews, a great friend of India and a contemporary of Mahatma Gandhi; and S. S. Rudra, the first Indian principal of St. Stephen College. His son, A. A. Budra, played with Sunder Singh.

What is the legacy of Sunder Singh?

What the Church needs most at present is honest, humble and selfless leaders who will serve in the spirit of Christ like Sadhu Sunder Singh. While men love virtue and adventure, and revere piety, simplicity and dedicated service, so long will the memory of Sadhu Sunder Singh be a legacy of richest blessing and inspiration to highest courage and to noblest effort for the glory of God and for the welfare of man.

The spirit of service which Sunder Singh created lives on.

Queen Wilhelmina who ruled Holland for fifty years, epitomised the life and work of Sunder Singh in these poignant words:

*'I never met him, I know him only from his books and the books about him, I belong to those who are deeply impressed by his life and teaching and I am sure the way he manifested his radiant love for Christ and His Peace, and in general his teaching was a real help to me in the worst episodes of the terrible catastrophe that was the last war (1939-45). Indeed, Sunder Singh was not 'a passing fashion' but a man whose example and teaching should always be remembered.'*

BARKAT MASIH KHOKHAR M. DIV. (King's, Canada)  
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